

## THE PLACE OF PRAYER IN THE EVANGELIZATION OF THE WORLD.

By Kate M. Hunt.

In all of our Lord's ministry there was nothing upon which he laid greater stress than upon prayer. Both by precept and example, he taught us its wonderful power. He placed in the hands of his weakest disciples this dynamic which, to use a common simile, is to the spiritual world the same silent, powerful, mysterious force that electricity is in the physical. An electrician studies for months and years and learns how to control the wonderful electric current. Take the machinery hall at one of our great World's Fairs, and see how the various machines are all started by the mere pressing of a button; how one man's hand, guided by an intelligent brain, can control this vast machinery. Wonderful, is it not? And we have often read and heard that prayer is as wonderful a force, and that any child of God can wield this force; but do we believe it, and have we really tried it? It is true that the electrician must take time to learn his business, and it is equally true that the Christian must learn by practice and experience, and that prayer should be the business of every Christian, and not just a side issue, picked up and practiced when nothing else is demanding one's time. Christ and his disciples had to earn their living, and yet he says to them, "Come ye apart and pray." Surely his was a busy life, a crowded life, and yet was not prayer one great secret of its success? He taught his followers to pray for themselves; he taught them the great privilege, the great duty of intercessory prayer. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth laborers into the harvest." And when these laborers went forth, look how, in that day, they cried to those at home, "Brethren, pray for us." Do our laborers whom we send forth need our prayers less than Paul did those of his friends who thus were fellow-helpers to the truth?

Oh, if we could only learn to stop saying prayers, and to pray! If we would let the Master teach us, and would so learn to feel his presence, to realize the guidance of his Spirit that prayer would come to mean to us real communion, a real waiting before the Lord, sometimes with earnest pleadings, sometimes without one word, but just with a heart listening for the still, small voice to whisper to us what there is in our lives that is hindering the abiding in him necessary to secure the desired blessing! Then, when we see by the light of the Spirit what is wrong in our lives, if we would but lay that, by his help, on the altar—oh, what a magnetic current would run from his heart to ours, and how we would learn to plead with power! And how this spirit force would go straight out from us into the spirit world, and as wireless telegraphy finds its receiving stations in far-distant lands as well as near-by points, so would this prayer force focus upon the spirit atmosphere of some soul or souls we were asking God to reach, and as quickly as thought travels, as lightning flashes, by our prayer, strength and courage, could be carried to some tried and disheartened worker here or in the distant fields that are so white to the harvest; conviction and conversion

could be brought to some of the souls sitting in darkness and the shadow of death here or in the uttermost parts of the earth. Do we doubt this? Let me tell you what I have seen myself: In a little Sabbath afternoon prayer meeting in one of our Virginia towns, during a series of very solemn meetings, a minister, at the close of the meeting, about five o'clock, requested that any persons in the church who desired prayer for some loved one would stand up. No names were called, but in various parts of the church one after another arose. I saw a mother and a sister stand, and I knew why. There was a young man in that family who had once been a member of the Church, but had been persuaded by a Jewish rabbi that Christ was not divine. Intellectual doubts and neglect of the means of grace had led to wrong living. That young man was then traveling in North Carolina. On Tuesday morning that mother received a letter written on Sunday night after service. It stated that the young man was sitting on a hotel porch with some drummers about five o'clock on Sunday evening, when he suddenly felt very restless and uncomfortable. He went to get a novel to read, but could not settle down; and suddenly he was overpowered with a conviction of sin. He went to the clerk and said, "Tell me where I can find a Presbyterian minister." Receiving directions, he went at once and found a minister in his study. He said, "I don't know what's the matter with me; I must be going crazy, but I am very miserable, and I am deeply convicted of sin." The reply was, "Young man, have you a praying mother?" "I certainly have." "Yes, I've seen such things before. Some one is wrestling with God for you. Let us pray with them." And there, at the footstool of grace, the burden of his sin rolled away.

Gordon, in his "Quiet Talks on Prayer," gives similar instances. Get that book and read it if you want real help in your prayer-life. I wonder sometimes that the Bible does not speak of the foolishness of prayer, as well as of the foolishness of preaching; but it does, I suppose, when it says that spiritual things can only be discerned spiritually, and that they are foolishness to the natural man. I have seen Christians doubt the leadings of the Spirit in answer to prayer, and speak of the belief in such leadings as fanaticism. Is that not because that Christian has failed to listen for the voice of the Spirit and to follow on to know the Lord by obeying the Spirit's suggestions? Let me tell you the experience of a friend of mine, a most earnest, prayerful—yes, prayer-full Christian. She had the habit of praying three times a day. The midday prayer was always an intercessory one, or a waiting on God. She told me that oftentimes she did not utter a word when she prayed, but waited for God's Spirit to tell her something to do or not to do. In this way she practiced obeying the Spirit. She was visiting a city once and started to see a friend, taking the usual streets to the friend's house, but as she passed a street she felt impelled to go that way. She had never done so before and resisted the inclination, going past the corner; but the feeling grew stronger and she said to herself, "Is the Lord leading me for anything?" She turned and found herself getting into a shabby part of the town. She passed an